MUSLIM SAINTS AND MYSTICS

Episodes from the
Tadhkirat al-Auliya'
(*Memorial of the Saints*)
by Farid al-Din Attar

TRANSLATED BY A. J. ARBERRY

OMPHALOSKEPSIS
AMES, IOWA

coquetry and self-regard, because I relied upon my own acts of obedience and approved of my own conduct. For five years further I laboured till that girdle was snapped and I was a Muslim anew. I looked upon all creatures, and saw that they were dead. I said four Allahu akbars over them, and returning from their obsequies without the jostling of God's creatures by God's succour I attained to God."

Whenever Abu Yazid arrived at the door of a mosque, he would stand a while and weep.

"Why do you do so?" he was asked.

"I feel myself to be as a menstruating woman who is ashamed to enter the mosque and defile the mosque," he replied.

On one occasion Abu Yazid set out on the journey to Hejaz, but no sooner had he gone forth when he returned.

"You have never failed in your purpose before," it was remarked. "Why did you do so now?"

"I had just turned my face to the road," he replied, "when I saw a black man standing with a drawn sword. 'If you return, well and good. If not, I will strike your head from your body. You have left God in Bestam,' he added, 'and set out for the Holy House.'"